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ABSTRACT

This paper recounts how two university colleagues, a business faculty member and a foreign language faculty member, benefited from their interdisciplinary contact as student and as teacher. Mutual anxieties, new language learning techniques using computers, and culture are discussed in a stylized dialogue between the two faculty members. From the experiences of these faculty members, business faculty members are encouraged to study a foreign language on their campuses as a viable, inexpensive way to initiate internationalization of the business faculty. The following recommendations are presented for business professors: study a foreign language; read foreign language publications and works about target language countries; watch foreign films, instructional videotapes, and foreign language TV; read literary classics of the target language countries; enjoy the art and music of the target language countries; and share this knowledge and enthusiasm with the business students. It is noted that this type of collaboration has allowed both professors to develop professionally, and that the learning process described, that of colleagues from different colleges collaborating as student and teacher, should be encouraged. Contains 21 references. (GLR)

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INTERNATIONALIZING THE BUSINESS PROFESSOR:

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

For Presentation to: The Eleventh Annual EMU Conference on

Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions.

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ABSTRACT

Helping a business professor become an international teacher was a new challenge for a modern language professor. This paper reports how two university colleagues, a business faculty member and a foreign language faculty member, benefitted from their interdisciplinary contact as student and as teacher. Mutual anxieties, new language learning techniques using computers, and culture are discussed in a stylized dialogue between the two faculty members. From their experiences, the authors encourage business faculty to study a foreign language on their campuses as a viable, inexpensive way to initiate internationalization of the business faculty.

INTERNATIONALIZING THE BUSINESS PROFESSOR: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Introduction

Business schools have recognized that they must internationalize their studies.[1] Yet, neither the business schools nor their accrediting group, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), has established firm guidelines. While some schools have moved ahead with innovative programs to internationalize,[2] most business schools have not. The most common approach requires current business courses to include a class session or two on international aspects of that course topic. This is all that many schools of business can afford. Other, more costly opportunities for internationalization include: faculty travel and research abroad; adding international business courses, concentrations, or majors; and, increasing the number of business faculty from other countries.

This study proposes a substantive, but inexpensive, alternative action that business faculty can take now -- the study of a foreign language and foreign culture at their institution. Before business schools and courses can be properly internationalized, the faculty teaching them must be. The following is a stylized dialogue between a business professor and his Spanish language professor, reporting their experiences as student and teacher, and as colleagues. They hope that their experiences will encourage other business and foreign language faculty to share their knowledge with each other.

Internationalization of Business? Are We Finally Being Heard?

> When Nissan first offered English lessons in the early 1960s, maybe a half-dozen people signed up. This year [1989] 800 enrolled. . . . President Kunio Kakiqi [of JVC, a large Japanese company] tells recruits that they should learn at least two foreign languages (Solo, 1989, p. 8).

Business Professor/Student:

A few years ago, the Department of Management of Wright State University conducted a major review and revision of its entire curriculum. Internationalization was a major consideration. The Department's new philosophy recognized that "the survival of organized society is dependent on the competence of the management of its social system." The Department's new mission was "to educate its students for today's environment as well as what may be expected in the 1990s and beyond."[3] The department acknowledged the AACSB's statement that: "The purpose of the curriculum shall be to provide for a broad education preparing the student for imaginative and responsible citizenship and leadership roles in business and society -- domestic and worldwide" (1986, p. 28). Our Department's non-U.S. born faculty were most helpful in designing international aspects into our courses. They spoke of business practices in their countries, and they spoke in several languages.

What could I do to prepare myself to participate in the internationalization of the Department's curriculum? I had never even travelled abroad. I decided that foreign language study might help. That decision lead me to much more than new words and new rules of grammar. Henry Ferguson described business as a series of communications. He said, "Language makes possible the abstractions that govern people's behavior. . . . It is those abstractions -- like friendship, loyalty, trust, permanence, and quality -- that make business possible within any culture. To go global means to be able to find common understanding of

what those abstractions mean in other languages and other cultures" (1988, p. 135). Ferguson's inventory of skills for the new global executive includes "mastery of new languages . . . with enough proficiency to conduct professional business [and] an awareness that the language of business is the customer's language. . . ." (p. 134)

Burdened with doubts and reservations, I enrolled in Spanish 101, for credit. Traumatic memories of my first attempt at foreign language study in high school, and the fact that I was 15 years out of graduate school were on my mind.

Modern Language Professor/Teacher:

Liberal arts colleges have been trying for some time now, with varying degrees of effort and success, to attract the attention of the business schools. While we are finally being heard, it remains to be seen if they are truly listening. Our Department of Modern Languages has for many years had the philosophy that foreign language study contributes to international understanding, world peace, and to careers in many areas, including foreign and domestic business.

In 1975, under the Helsinki Agreement, the U.S. and other participants agreed, "To encourage the study of foreign languages and civilizations as an important means of expanding communication among peoples for their better acquaintance with the culture of each country. . . ." (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe). Many recent efforts by departments of modern languages stem from the 1979 report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. The Commission found that "Americans' incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse." (p. 12) This report

caused a general review of language teaching methods. For example, it recommended a common, nationally recognized standard for measuring language proficiency, which ACTFL has provided. Hence, twelve years after the 1979 report we now focus much more on the communicative or functional aspects of foreign language learning, and on the cultural environment of our foreign languages. If these developments are explained, I believe that many business faculty may see the opportunity that foreign language study now offers to help them internationalize themselves, their programs, and their students.

More recently, the Advisory Council of International Education in its report, *Educating for Global Competence*, recommended that all colleges and universities must internationalize, otherwise "we will irreversibly diminish the world status of the United States" (1988, p. 1). "The goal should be *a high level of internationalization of the faculty*." (p. 15) The report concludes that "We must realize, and thus prepare for, our intense interdependence with other countries." (p. 21) To accomplish this goal, I suggest that we also need to prepare for increased interdependence among university colleges and disciplines.

The Department of Modern Languages at our university has offered both a Commercial Spanish and a Commercial French course for many years. Only occasionally do we attract a business major to these classes. If foreign language study were required by the business college, or at least actively promoted, we could offer the commercial courses more frequently and at various levels of language proficiency. This would be a specific and useful blending of liberal arts and business.

The Older Learner And Anxiety

> Many older learners fear failure more than their younger counterparts. This may be due to their acceptance of the stereotype of the older person as a poor language learner or because of previously unsuccessful attempts to learn a foreign language (Schleppegrell, 1987, p. 3).

Business Professor/Student:

Friends discouraged me with tales of failing language courses in college. The few business professors whose Ph.D. programs had required foreign language study, talked of spending more time studying a language than their major. They told of giving (or throwing) away their study materials when they passed their language proficiency exam.

My fears and anxiety were somewhat overcome in the first class session when the professor assured the students that she assumed that we lacked prior Spanish studies. Fortunately, the teacher had a great ability to relate the material at a very fundamental level. Those first two weeks in the classroom were the most critical. It was the teacher's appreciation of the difficulty of the material for beginners, and her constant assurances to the class that we would learn, that motivated me to stay in the class.

The first examination was the next hurdle. My test anxiety was intense. While the anxiety decreased with each subsequent exam, it was always there to a significant degree. Now I have a better understanding of what many of my business students must experience during exams. One of my fellow language students had been a student in my business class. His presence, and the rumor that spread among the business students about me being a student in a freshman class, also increased my anxiety. But, as the weeks passed, I received only positive feedback from my business students. They were both curious and impressed. Several have since

followed my lead and have begun to study a foreign language.

Language Professor/Teacher:

While I was convinced of my colleague/student's sincerity in learning Spanish, I also experienced some anxiety about having him enrolled in my class. Would he criticize my class or techniques? My concerns were quickly dispelled when I realized that he too was insecure. A member of my department informed me that my colleague/student had gotten up at 3:00 a.m. to continue studying for the first examination.

My colleague/student, like other adult learners, was conscientious and determined to do well. Also, like many dedicated students, he was unsure of what he could accomplish in two years of language study. Most have unrealistic expectations of quickly becoming "fluent" after a few months of study, and so many become discouraged. Adult learners need support and guidance to ease their initial fears of language study, and encouragement to continue.

A non-threatening approach to begin the study of a second language is the Total Physical Response (TPR) developed by James J. Asher. It is based on the belief that before any active oral participation from students is expected, listening comprehension should be developed. This is how children learn their native language, and just as children respond to oral commands, so too does the language student (Omaggio, 1986, p. 72). I have incorporated TPR into my beginning Spanish classes, especially during the first few days. Typically, my adult learners always volunteer. It is especially appealing when the students know that, except for the instructor, no one has to say a word. I use simple commands like "Stand up, Walk, Turn around, and Sit." I give the commands, act them out, and the students imitate me. TPR is a

comfortable initiation into the language and captures the attention of the students. My students have reported that using TPR in the first few classes helped to ease their anxiety.[4]

The Search For The Easy Way

> Language is not an ordinary, fifty-minute-a-day, two-year subject. It is a commitment to the development of cultural understandings, competencies, and proficiencies, the mastery of which requires many years of study in and out of the classroom (Valdes, 1988, p. 5).

Business Professor/Student:

After several weeks of Spanish classes, I wondered if there was an easier, more efficient way for me to learn the language. I had started out using reliable study techniques: regular class attendance, completing all homework assignments, highlighting the text, preparing chapter summaries, and using flash cards. But, I felt that some additional method may help me learn. Interestingly, it was during this search that I first encountered the disciplines of linguistics, second language acquisition, and adult education. Additionally, I consulted with a neurologist friend for information about the brain and how it best learns a new language.[5]

My search resulted in a variation of the traditional flash card method. The production of flash cards for vocabulary and grammar was too time-consuming. Cards had to be redone as related words, rules and exceptions were covered. After experimenting, my solution was to use the computer. All existing flash card materials were transferred into one of forty files on the computer, such as: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, affirmatives and negatives, comparatives, present tense, preterit tense, and others. Some files also had subfiles. For example, nouns included the house, the city, food, sports, and others. Changes could easily be

made on the computer. Related vocabulary words could be inserted in their proper place. Also, when I found a better explanation of a confusing rule in another source, I could easily incorporate it. The files were then printed onto 8 1/2 x 11 pages.

For vocabulary study, only seven words were printed on a page. The neurologist had explained to me that seven is the ideal number of separate items for the human brain to contemplate at one time. The vocabulary words were printed in very large type, and each page was placed in a three ring binder (example in Appendix A). The neurologist had reminded me of those first readers in grade school -- the ones with the large print. Large print makes for a larger image on the retina, which in turn makes a stronger neurological impulse to the brain, thereby facilitating retention. Also, the summarized grammar rules were enlarged and printed in a similar manner (example in Appendix B).

The binder simplified study in other ways. It was easier to carry than several shoeboxes of cards. To study for an examination, I placed a paper clip on the appropriate pages, or I pulled those pages, replacing them afterward. Furthermore, by using tabbed dividers, each individual area was clearly identified for quick reference while doing homework. This crisp organization appealed to my accounting-trained mind.

While I did not discover an easy way to learn Spanish, I found a technique that worked better for me. For two years, I averaged fifteen hours of study per week. Foreign business students confirmed the necessary investment of time, adding that it took them years of serious study before they could take business classes taught in English. Also, I felt better about my slow progress when the professor identified the typical times in contact hours that it takes to learn the various major foreign languages.

Language Professor/Teacher:

Our society is obsessed with speed. Students must accept the fact that it takes a long time to become fluent in a foreign language. There is no "Instant Spanish." Advertisements making such claims are misleading. It has been reported that Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Swahili, Rumanian, and Swedish, take about 720 contact hours, under ideal conditions, to achieve a superior level of speaking proficiency. German, Russian, Hindi, Greek, Malay, Bulgarian, Czech, Hebrew, Polish, Thai, and Bengali, take about 1,320 contact hours, under ideal conditions, to achieve the superior level. Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, take 2,760 contact hours, under ideal conditions, to attain the same level of oral proficiency (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982).

In view of the 720 contact hours for Spanish, Omaggio has noted, "Even with 72 hours of contact time per semester, college students would need *at least* ten semesters of language instruction to reach this goal" (1986, p. 20). While foreign language professors agree that there are limits to what a college student can do after a few classes, most also would agree that it is amazing that so much is accomplished in the limited number of contact hours.[6] However limited, some language proficiency is possible at all levels of study.

Today's foreign language study methods are designed to reduce tension while emphasizing the ability to function in the language rather than being able to talk about it (Watkins, 1989, p. A1). Of course, students still need to acquire and develop their study habits. After giving students a list of suggestions, I encourage them to develop their own study techniques.[7] I was pleased when my colleague/student told me of his computer study method. Other students have made similar comments about the inconveniences of flash cards. I think the computer "method"

he developed is excellent. Also, vocabulary learning may be facilitated by using the enlarged letters. While there is no easy way to learn a language, such devices help. Foreign language teachers have many practical ways to make learning enjoyable, and we must implement them as our limited time permits. We must challenge our students to be creative in the learning process.

Language + Culture = Understanding

> [Senator Paul Tsongas speaks about his experience in the Peace Corps:] I believe that I learned more than a language. Something else penetrated my Yankee mind, something eternal and very mysterious. Maybe it was a sense of being Ethiopian. I will never forget that exhilarating experience. I only wish that more could share it (Tsongas, 1981, p. 118).

Business Professor/Student:

Like Senator Tsongas, the most valuable lesson that I learned was that the study of a language is also a study of the cultures of the host countries. "Managers must be culturally adaptable, and have specific knowledge about the history, language, and culture of the places their organizations operate in. . . . The situation is exacerbated by the fact that professors in most of the business schools also lack international diversity and hands-on international experience" (Abell, 1989, p. 3). It was the many cultural aspects of the language that provided the most motivation to continue. "Motivation is a prerequisite for efficient learning, and good teaching transforms resistance to interest and sustains the curiosity that brought students into the course" (Erickson, 1985, p. 30). The textbook included cultural aspects. The professor introduced many more through her travel slides and discussions of her personal experiences. Films (artistic and travelogue) were also good motivating factors.

I am still motivated to continue my study of the Spanish language and of its native

cultures. For example, the book *The Spaniards* has given me an excellent glimpse into Spanish society since the death of Franco in 1975 (Hooper, 1986). I have also found Spain's new constitution and its implementation to be an intriguing study. Watching Spanish speaking stations that originate from Mexico or from the United States has proved to be an invaluable resource to continue my language and culture studies.[8]

The cultural aspects of foreign language learning will most benefit business students and faculty. In 1989 an interdisciplinary team of faculty from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published *Made In America*, reporting the results of its two-year study of what has happened to U.S. industrial performance (Dertouzos & Lester, 1989). The panel studied industries that account for 50 percent of U.S. foreign trade. One of the eleven strategies that it recommends for industry is, "Insist that key employees have an adequate understanding of foreign cultures." (p. 150) The panel's principal recommendation for MIT, and for all of us, is, "MIT should broaden its educational approach in the sciences, in technology, and in the humanities and should educate students to be more sensitive to . . . the cultures, institutions, and business practices of other countries." (p. 157) Its third educational recommendation is "to include . . . exposure to international cultures . . . [and] reinstitute a foreign-language requirement in the undergraduate admissions process." (p. 158) These are strong mandates from a very prestigious group of educators and should not be ignored.

Language Professor/Teacher:

It is possible to study culture in every sense of the word when studying a foreign language, from daily habits to great works of art in the target language countries (Allen, 1977,

p. 325). To keep up with a constantly changing world, students learn about the culture through reading Spanish newspapers and magazines, viewing instructional videotapes, movies, slides and satellite TV. We still teach literature and encourage our students to read great works, for there is no substitute for reading the literature in the target language. But, these other sources also give them an understanding of the people, especially when used as part of the course content. Language + Culture = Understanding.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Business Professor/Student:

From my recent foreign language experiences, I recommend that business professors:

- Study a foreign language.
- Read foreign language publications and works about target language countries.
- Watch foreign films, instructional videotapes, and foreign language TV.
- Read literary classics of the target language countries.
- Enjoy the art and music of the target language countries.
- Share your knowledge and enthusiasm with your business students.

Internationalization of the business school includes internationalizing the business faculty. Business faculty members can study a foreign language and culture at their institutions as a major contribution toward accomplishing this goal. I encourage my students to study a foreign language, to experience other culture's events in the community, and to consider careers and jobs with international businesses. Finally, I urge business professors to meet your language professor colleagues in their classrooms. A short walk across campus can open the global doors

to the present and the future.[9]

Language Professor/Teacher:

While the idea of colleagues working together is not new, the role of colleagues from different colleges as teacher and student, and then as co-authors, offers a different perspective to the ordinary. The positive ramifications of collaboration are limitless. Therefore, it is with many opportunities in mind that I recommend that:

- Business faculty study a foreign language and encourage their students to do the same.
- Language courses include areas of specific interest to business faculty and business students.
- Business faculty and foreign language faculty enter other joint ventures in good faith and with mutual respect.

The experience described in this paper has been an opportunity to develop professionally. My former student continues to send me articles from business publications about language learning, international business, and international education that I would not otherwise have seen. I now have a ready source of advice for the content of my commercial Spanish class. Perhaps, even more importantly, this collaborative effort has made me more sensitive to business, the College of Business, its faculty and classes. Liberal arts and business have a common mission and goal to internationalize. We can move forward with the positive actions discussed in this paper.[10]

Footnotes

[1]"Business schools are scrambling to 'internationalize' their programs to meet the challenge of the global economy. . . . 'Perhaps the most difficult issue is how to get started,' says David H. Blake, dean of the graduate business school at Rutgers University" (Evangelauf, 1989, p. A11).

[2]The University of South Carolina is an innovative leader with its Master in International Business Studies. The School of Business, Indiana University, is supplying faculty for a new MBA program in Madrid. Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, is a leader in language and international trade.

[3]Peter F. Drucker, one of the greatest living business gurus, has since written: "Rarely in human history has any institution emerged as quickly as management or had as great an impact so fast. In less than one hundred fifty years, management has transformed the social and economic fabric of the world's developed countries. It has created a global economy. . . " (1989, p. 221).

[4]Included among my adult learners have been physicians, nurses, TV personalities, executives, parents, grandparents, and one great-grandmother. Another technique that helps these adult learners feel at ease is to participate in class skits. Also, many enjoy giving presentations based on their career field.

[5]I thank Dr. Mark A. Mac Nealy, Neurologist, for his instruction on the functioning of the brain.

[6]In two years of Spanish (101-102-103, 201-202-203) our students make substantial progress even with our limited number of contact hours -- 240 for two years.

[7]Besides daily study, I suggest that my students do the following: use flash cards, study aloud, listen to audio tapes, study with someone, read newspapers, watch foreign films, etc.

[8]Programs are regularly broadcast on several satellite transponders in many languages, including: Spanish, French, Italian, Greek, Russian, Japanese, and others.

[9]High school business teachers are invited to do the same.

[10]The authors thank Ann C.Wendt, Assistant Professor of Management, and David M. Matual, Professor of Russian, for commenting on this paper.

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APPENDIX A

Below is a sample page of the binder showing the enlargement of vocabulary words.

SUSTANTIVOS LA CIUDAD

la oficina	office
el trabajo	work
el empleo	employment
el desempleo	unemployment
el centro	downtown
el banco	bank
el negocio	business

APPENDIX B

Below is a sample page of the binder showing the enlargement of grammar rules.

gustar

to please, be pleasing

The person, thing, or idea that is pleasing is the subject.

The person pleased is the indirect object.

AN INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN IS NORMALLY USED:

me	nos
te	os
le	les

Usually 3rd person singular or plural -- depends on subject.

Me gusta esta clase.	I like this class.
¿Te gustan las revistas?	Do you like the magazines?
Nos gustan mucho estos libros.	We like these books a lot.

Prepositional "a" + noun or pronoun often used with "gustar" for emphasis or clarity. Usually placed at the beginning.

A Juan le gusta la casa.	Juan likes the house.
A los niños les gusta la casa.	The children like the house.
A usted le gustan los libros.	You like the books.

If what is liked is an infinitive, use 3rd person singular.

No me gusta cocinar.	I don't like to cook.
A José le gusta cocinar.	José likes to cook.